DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 010 FL 019 587

AUTHOR Valdes, Gabriel M.
TITLE Florida: State of the Foreign Language Arts.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 12p.; In: Planning for Proficiency. Dimension: Language '86. Report of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, p29-39, 1987; see FL 019 583.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Admission Criteria; College Admission; Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; *Enrollment Trends; FLES; Graduation Requirements; Higher Education; International Studies; *Language Teachers; Postsecondary Education; Public Agencies; *Public Policy; Second Language Instruction; *Second Language Learning; Second Language Programs; State Legislation; *Statewide Planning; Student Financial Aid; Teacher Certification; Teacher Education; Teacher Retirement; Teacher Supply and Demand; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Florida

ABSTRACT

In Florida, foreign language teaching has consistently followed national trends. Currently, there is a renaissance in language study. Enrollment has increased dramatically at all educational levels, due to a mandated state university system entrance requirement and two programs, the Florida Academic Scholars Program and Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools (FLES). The first of these programs recognizes and rewards outstanding high school graduates completing a rigorous program including two years of foreign language study. As enrollment has increased, the language curriculum has become more consistent throughout the state, and school districts have adopted student performance standards for each secondary academic program. Increased enrollment has also led to a teacher shortage, in response to which the legislature has established various programs, including the Critical Teacher Shortage Program, a tuition reimbursement program, repayment of educational loans for eligible teachers, a scholarship loan program for prospective teachers currently in college, and a master's degree fellowship loan program. Alternative certification, visiting scholars, rehiring of retired teachers as substitutes, and expansion of the state career information system also help provide teachers. Establishment of a state international education office and a statewide educational assessment project enhance program evaluation and design. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED337010

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

N. Gastro

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

4

Florida: State of the Foreign Language Arts

Gabriel M. Valdes
Foreign Language Program Specialist
Florida Department of Education

Introduction

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Latin and Greek were not only the most popular foreign languages taught in the United States, but they were also the most important subjects in the school curriculum. After the democratization of American schools, Latin and Greek continued their popularity as mental disciplines. Today, Latin has continued in the high school curriculum both as a mental discipline and as a vehicle to better understand English and western civilization. Classical Greek has almost disappeared completely. Modern Greek is being taught in some places.

Since the eighteenth century, French has maintained its status as the cultural foreign language. German began to emerge in the eighteenth century as a practical language, but during the nineteenth century also fell under the orientation of mental disciplines. After World War I the teaching of German declined dramatically. The teaching of Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish began in the eighteenth century for the practical values of these languages in international commerce. Spanish enrollment has continued to increase in the modern language curriculum, and in contemporary times has been the most popular foreign language in the American high school offerings.

The teaching of modern languages has always been considered as part of the secondary school curriculum. Modern languages and Latin had been sporadically taught in elementary schools, but other than during periods of strong federal financial support, no serious efforts have been placed on planning, implementing, and maintaining modern languages at the elementary level. The practical values for teaching and learning a foreign language have been seldom considered. Latin and Greek were

FL019587

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

taught in New England for the reading and interpretation of the Scriptures. In a theocratic state this teaching had practical values. After democratization of schooling in America, Latin and Greek remained as college-entrance requirements with very little practical value. Those languages that were taught at the beginning for their practical values in international commerce, such as Italian and Spanish, promptly became mental disciplines in the nineteenth century. The declines in modern language enrollment in recent times may reflect the lack of practical values placed in the modern language curriculum.

In the world that communications makes smaller every day, it is important and necessary that people from different linguistic and cultural groups be able to understand each other. The teaching of modern languages should focus on both extrinsic and intrinsic values. Modern languages should not only be considered as college-entrance requirements; they should also be considered as practical skills for everyone. The foreign language profession is changing its pedagogical philosophy at the national level to fulfill this need in foreign language education by placing an increasing emphasis on the development of functional ability.

In the State of Florida the teaching of foreign languages has followed national trends since the end of the nineteenth century. At the present time, there is a renaissance in the study of foreign languages. Foreign language education has become the "basic plus" in the State of Florida. Recent legislation has provided a positive impact on enrollment, curriculum, and teachers. This paper describes and interconnects the causes of the expansion of the study of foreign languages in Florida.

Changes in Enrollment

Enrollment in foreign language classes has increased dramatically in Florida. The number of students taking foreign languages (K-Adult) in the school year 1985-86 was 283,190, a 20 percent increase over the previous year. There were 176,392 students taking foreign languages at the secondary level, representing 37 percent of secondary enrollment. These annual increases have been present for the last four school years. The reasons for this increase in enrollment seem to be based in one mandate, the State University System entrance requirement, and two programs, the Florida Academic Scholars Program and the Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools (FLES) Program.

Although foreign languages are elective credits for high school graduation requirements, effective August 1, 1987, all freshmen and all undergraduate transfer students must have two high school academic units in foreign language or the equivalent to be admitted to any of the nine universities that comprise the State University System. However, undergraduate transfer students from community colleges with Associate of Arts (AA) degrees or from other institutions with sixty or more semester hours of transferable credit are not required to have two units in foreign language for admission until August 1, 1989, as provided by 1986 statutory amendments. During a transition period, the law specifically exempts two groups of undergraduate students from the foreign language requirement. The first exempt group includes those students who receive AA degrees prior to September 1, 1987. The second group of exempted students includes those who enroll full-time in a program of studies leading to an Associate of Arts degree from a Florida community college prior to August 1, 1989, and who maintain continuous full-time enrollment until they are admitted to a university. Continuous full-time enrollment is defined as enrollment for a minimum of 24 credit hours during any two semesters and a related summer term. The credits may be of any type offered by a community college. With the 1986 Legislature's change to the law, a new requirement for a state university student has been established. Beginning August 1, 1987, and continuing until August 1, 1989, undergraduate transfer students who are admitted to a university and who have not completed two credits of sequential enrollment or the equivalent of such instruction at the postsecondary level (and who are not in one of the two previously described exempt groups) must earn such foreign language credits or the equivalent before they may be admitted to the upper division of the university. However, beginning August 1, 1989, all undergraduate students (freshmen and transfer students) who are not in one of the two exempt groups, must already have earned the equivalent of two credits of sequential foreign language at the secondary level before admission to a university.

It is obvious that this university entrance requirement has increased, and will continue to increase, the enrollment of college-bound students in foreign language courses. It is also obvious that the entrance requirement has created some problems at the high school level, such as increasing enrollment in the first two levels of the languages; this causes administrative problems concerning priority of these courses over upper-level courses. Also, some students with a very low aptitude for foreign

languages in general have to take the language courses if they are college-bound students. However, these problems represent only a small proportion of the total enrollment.

Another program that has increased enrollment is the Florida Academic Scholars Program. It recognizes and rewards outstanding high school graduates who complete a rigorous and advanced program of prescribed academic studies, including two years of a foreign language. Any two sequential courses in grades 9-12, in the same language, from those listed in the Department of Education Course Code Directory (with the exception of courses designated as conversational) can be used to fulfill the requirements of the Florida Academic Scholars Program. The impact of this program on enrollment was very high at the beginning. With the advent of the college entrance requirement, this impact has been diluted because all college-bound students have to take two years of a foreign language and the outstanding students in the program are likely to be college-bound. Also, the students in this program have to take so many required courses that they have very few elective courses should they want to continue the study of a foreign language beyond the second year at the high school level.

Finally, the Foreign Languages in Elementary Schools (FLES) Program is starting to increase enrollment in upper level courses because the students who have taken a foreign language in elementary schools arrive in secondary education at an advanced level. The FLES program provides funds for foreign language instruction in elementary schools. Local school districts must match state funds on a one-to-one basis to participate in the program. It started in school year 1982-83 with twelve school districts participating. By the beginning of the 1986-87 academic term, there were twenty-four schools districts participating in the program with an enrollment of more than 50,000 students. Although Spanish is the most popular language in the program, French and Latin classes are starting to emerge. The program is spread throughout the state with many small rural school districts participating.

Curricular Changes

As enrollment has increased, so the curriculum for foreign languages has become more consistent throughout the state. Chapter 83-350, *Laws of Florida,* authorized the Department of Education to develop, maintain, and revise curriculum frameworks for the purpose of

insuring a degree of instructional consistency within academic disciplines among middle and high schools in Florida. Also, state statutes authorized school districts to adopt student performance standards for each academic program in grades 9-12 for which credit toward high school graduation is awarded. These standards were based on the uniform curriculum frameworks adopted by the State Board of Education. The school boards also establish policies as to student mastery of performance standards before credit for the program can be awarded. The development of these curriculum frameworks and student performance standards was conducted by statewide task forces composed of foreign language faculty and supervisory staff from almost half of the school districts in Florida. Uniformity was the legislative mandate; change was the task forces' decision. The curriculum frameworks and student performance standards were loosely based on the competencies developed by the initial ACTFL/ETS Provisional Proficiency Guidelines (1982). These state-adopted standards require that the students perform, at the end of each school year or level, certain linguistic tasks that vary from survival skills at the lower levels to elaborated skills at the upper level.

Although no specific methodology is mandated, these competencies represent certain changes in education philosophy. In foreign language education, Florida, as well as the rest of the nation, has gone from a grammar-translation approach to a communicative approach, passing through the audio-lingual methodology. The base is now set for foreign language instruction geared toward an active utilization of the language by the students. The program created by the curriculum frameworks has been basically accepted by the teachers. Its implementation requires a great deal of staff development.

Teacher Shortage

The increase in enrollment during the last four years has resulted in a shortage of foreign language teachers. To counteract this shortage, the Legislature has established various programs. The largest and most important is the Critical Teacher Shortage Program. This program has created a series of advantages for present and future teachers, such as staff development, grants, loans, and tuition reimbursement programs.

The Summer Inservice Institute Program, created under the Critical Teacher Shortage Program, is one of the most exciting and most

enthusiastically received staff development programs ever introduced in Florida. This program was established by the 1983 Legislature and implemented for the first time in the summer of 1984. The program requires each school district or group of districts to conduct an inservice institute which provides rigorous training for public school instructional personnel. The legislation and concomitant rule specify that the instruction must be intensive subject-area content training. Each year the legislature determines the areas of instruction that will be addressed in the forthcoming institutes and the instructional personnel who will be eligible to participate. Foreign language teachers have been participating in the program since the summer of 1985. The foreign language institutes may provide rigorous content instruction in any foreign language listed in the Course Code Directory. Eligible participants are those instructional personnel with the assigned responsibility for teaching an eligible foreign language. First priority is given to those teaching a foreign language out-of-field and to those participating in an approved foreign language add-on certification program. This is done to increase the number of teachers certified in foreign languages. A foreign language teacher may participate in one of the courses addressing a language that he/she is presently not teaching. The length of instruction in the institutes is sixty hours. They are usually conducted in a two-week period. Although specific content instruction is mandatory, there are situations in which methodology is included in the instruction. The amount of time allotted to the teaching of methodology and other pedagogy cannot be more than twelve hours. The main thrust of the program, therefore, is to increase language skills.

Another program that provides staff development activities for foreign language teachers is the Tuition Reimbursement Program. It has been created to encourage Florida teachers to become certified to teach a foreign language or to gain a graduate degree in a critical teacher shortage area and, consequently, to teach in a critical teacher shortage area. Participants may receive tuition reimbursement payments for up to nine semester hours, or the equivalent in quarter hours, per academic year, at a rate not to exceed $78 per semester hour, up to a total of thirty-six semester hours. All tuition reimbursements are contingent on passing an approved course with a minimum grade of 3.0 or its equivalent. Only full-time teachers certified to teach in Florida and currently teaching full-time in the Florida public school system, who are taking courses to either acquire certification or improve their skills in a designated critical teacher shortage area (CTSA), are eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement.

Another program is designed to attract graduates certified in a CTSA designated by the Florida Department of Education to teach in the area in the public school system. Eligible teachers may have up to $10,000 of principal balance of educational loans repaid by the state, $2,500 per year for undergraduate study, and $5,000 per year for graduate study leading to certification in a CTSA and who is teaching for the first time in a critical shortage area in a Florida public school.

Finally, two other programs are designed to attract future teachers. One is the Critical Teacher Shortage Scholarship Loan Program that is available to junior, senior, or graduate students at eligible Florida institutions; these students must be enrolled in teacher education programs preparing to become foreign language teachers. The loan amount is $4,000 per year for a maximum of two years. If a recipient completes the teacher education program and teaches as a full-time teacher in Florida for four years, there is no monetary repayment. If the recipient does not complete the teacher education program or does not teach in Florida, the scholarship/loan is repaid with interest. The other program is the Masters' Fellowship Loan Program that is designed to attract liberal arts graduates and science graduates to teach in the Florida public school system. It provides financial assistance to those students who are admitted to a Masters' Program for Teachers developed jointly between the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences at a participating Florida university. The value of the fellowship/loan is $6,000 plus payment of tuition and fees for two semesters and up to two summer sessions. Fellowship recipients shall complete three years of public school service within five years after graduation from the program. Any person who fails to complete the program or the required teaching service is also liable to repay the loan with interest.

Some other measures have been taken for counteracting the teacher shortage. An Alternative Certification Program has been created to provide certification to persons who hold a bachelor's degree in a foreign language. Adjunct instructors can be hired as part of the Visiting School Scholars Program. Retired teachers can be hired as substitute teachers and, finally, legislative action called for the expansion of the Department of Education's career information system and the establishment of a teacher referral and recruitment center.

In order to address the growing international education needs of the state, the 1986 Legislature passed the International Education Act, which established the Office of International Education. This office coordinates activities on international education in cooperation with

academic institutions and other agencies with funds provided by the Legislature for this purpose. The duties of the Office of International Education include the following:

1. serving as information clearinghouse on international education resources;
2. compiling, maintaining, and disseminating a directory of international education resources;
3. providing liaison with federal, state and governmental agencies, as requested, on issues related to international education; and,
4. administering the Latin American/Caribbean Basin Scholarship Program.

The Florida Commission on International Education was created under the same act. It is staffed by the Office of International Education. The Commission is an advisory entity to state government. This Commission and the Office of International Education have as one of their main mandates to encourage public schools, community colleges, and universities to incorporate international education into their programs and strengthen the international character of course offerings, faculty resources, and research opportunities. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, the provision of:

1. instruction in foreign languages and culture, political education and economic development, as part of the regular K-12 curriculum and in postsecondary education;
2. foreign languages and international studies as components of in-field courses for the certification and recertification of elementary and secondary teachers;
3. means through which the delivery of foreign language instruction may be strengthened;
4. foreign language and international education components within summer inservice institutes and staff and program development activities;
5. participation in overseas academic, research, international trade, and cross-cultural exchange programs

for Florida and Latin American/Caribbean students and faculty members;

6. international magnet high school and international programs which draw on resources of the local international business community, other postsecondary institutions, and other agencies.

Another project giving impetus to language study is entitled Foreign Language Instruction in Florida (FLIF): An Assessment of Its Status and Recommendations for Its Future. This recently funded state project under Title II of the Education for Economic Security Act (Public Law 98-377) examines the educational needs of the State of Florida in the area of foreign language education in light of Section 240.231(1)(b), Florida Statutes, which requires that after August 1, 1987, all students must have two years of a foreign language or its equivalent in order to be admitted to any one of Florida's nine public universities. The FLIF project, by conducting an evaluation and developing recommendations, will assist the state and its public institutions in determining what actions should be taken in order to make appropriate adjustments. Improvements will enable students to move through instruction efficiently and at uniform levels of performance. The project's objectives are:

1. recommend, for each level of education, foreign language proficiency standards to be used to:
   a. assess course equivalencies offered in high schools, community colleges, and universities;
   b. evaluate appropriate foreign language placement tests as a means of moving students through instruction on an individualized basis as standards are achieved; and,
   c. evaluate the applicability of instructional technologies (instructional computers, interactive video, video cassettes, radio, television, and traditional language laboratory equipment) to the instructional needs of students and teachers.

2. develop recommendations for policy changes in the rules of the State Board of Education, Board of Regents, and State Board of Community Colleges

related to the implementation of the new foreign language requirement at all levels of education.

3. design a resource requirement model for foreign language instruction which identifies and generates the basis for needs for additional staff, program and staff development and instructional equipment.

The FLIF project involves approximately 45 faculty and academic administrators from the public school, community college, and university systems. Staff members from the Division of Public Schools, Board of Regents, and State Board of Community Colleges participate in the project also. The final recommendations of the project will be available during the spring of 1987.

Summary and Conclusions

Recent legislative actions have had heavy impact on foreign language education in the State of Florida. Increases in enrollment, due primarily to university entrance requirements, have created a shortage of foreign language teachers. The actions taken to reduce this shortage have been effective, reducing the percentage of foreign language classes taught by out-of-field teachers. However, the number of teachers needed to fulfill the state's staffing needs are still in the hundreds.

At the same time that increases in enrollment and decreases in teacher availability are occurring, changes in curriculum are inclining the foreign language education philosophy toward a more communicative approach. All of these changes have been occurring without major problems because of actions taken by the Legislature dealing with staff development and new hiring practices and incentives. Although foreign language education at the present moment is going through very significant but positive changes, school and district administrative and teaching staff are working at their utmost strength to prepare students to become proficient in foreign languages. The future of foreign language education in Florida looks as bright as the horizons being opened to the students.

Bibliography

ACTFL Provisional Proficiency Guidelines. New York: American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1982.